

VZCZCXRO1428
PP RUEHSL
DE RUEHUP #0810/01 3141344
ZNY CCCCC ZZH
P 101344Z NOV 09
FM AMEMBASSY BUDAPEST
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 4645
INFO RHEHAAA/NATIONAL SECURITY COUNCIL WASHINGTON DC PRIORITY
RUEHZG/NATO EU COLLECTIVE

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 BUDAPEST 000810

SIPDIS

DEPARTMENT FOR EUR/CE JAMIE MOORE. PLEASE PASS TO JEFF
HOVENIER AT NSC

E.O. 12958: DECL: 11/04/2014
TAGS: [PREL](#) [NATO](#) [EUN](#) [SO](#) [ZL](#) [HU](#)
SUBJECT: HUNGARIAN FOREIGN MINISTER'S BRIEFING TO NATO/EU
AMBASSADORS

REF: BUDAPEST 667

BUDAPEST 00000810 001.2 OF 002

Classified By: Political Officer Jon Martinson, reasons 1.4 (b,d)

11. (SBU) Summary. Hungarian Foreign Minister Peter Balazs briefed NATO and EU Ambassadors November 4 on several key MFA focus areas. Stating he was very pleased with the Lisbon Treaty ratification, Balazs commented that he looks for accelerated action to place the treaty in force by December. Providing a read-out of a Visegrad Four, Hungarian-hosted Western Balkans forum in October, Balazs, referring to the Balkans as "a region with few people, more states, and even greater problems," stated that NATO and the EU cannot carry 100 percent of the effort. He stressed infrastructure development to "connect" the region with their EU member state neighbors as a key element for progress. Commenting on his November 3 meeting with his Slovak counterpart to symbolically initiate the rebuilding of a bridge connecting the two countries, the FM said this is a positive step to move bi-lateral relations forward. The FM, noting that the GOH was not invited to join the "wisemen" group working on a new NATO strategic concept, informed the Ambassadors that he has established a Hungarian "wisemen group" to provide input to the NATO agenda. Balazs closed the briefing with comments on climate change, the new "Danube Strategy," and a renewed engagement with Turkey. End summary.

LISBON TREATY

12. (C) Hungarian Foreign Minister Peter Balazs held a closed briefing November 4 for NATO and EU Ambassadors accredited in Budapest. The A/DCM attended on behalf of the Charge. Balazs began by stating he was very pleased with the Lisbon Treaty ratification, expressing his appreciation for the Swedish presidency efforts. He anticipates rapid action at an upcoming extraordinary EU summit meeting to accelerate the Treaty's implementation by December. Commenting on Czech concerns with certain aspects of the treaty, Balazs expressed regret that some EU members take exception and opt out on fundamental rights issues, but noted that it is their right as an internal affairs matter but "we will find a way for those who do not wish to be involved." Specifically referring to the Czechoslovak Benes decrees after W.W.II, the Foreign Minister called them regrettable, but the subject is "a closed chapter that belongs in the past; the Lisbon Treaty is about the future."

WESTERN BALKANS

13. (C) Noting Hungary's strategic interest in the Western Balkans, the Foreign Minister described it as "a region with few people, more states, and even greater problems; a region where instability leads to insecurity." Acknowledging that each Western Balkan country is a "unique case," Balazs called Bosnia "one of the biggest headaches," as its government currently has no ability to shape the State. The FM underscored that the message to the three communities must be that there is no real alternative to keeping Bosnia, as it exists today, together. Providing a review of a Visegrad Four, GOH-hosted October 6 forum with all the Balkan FMs, plus Sweden, Belgium, and Spain, Balazs specifically mentioned the participation of two countries, Spain and Slovakia, who do not recognize Kosovo's independence. Summarizing the discussions, the FM outlined three main messages from the forum:

- From the perspective of the Visegrad Four, the state-building process in the Balkans must come to a conclusion in a positive way, but NATO and the EU cannot handle 100 percent of the effort; implying that individual countries in the Balkans and the surrounding region must share the burden.

- As all the Western Balkan countries' neighbors are EU member States, it is essential that the EU help with integration through infrastructure development that connects the WB countries with their neighbors. This connectivity is a key to addressing the issues in the region, otherwise they will remain a permanent source of instability.

- On rapprochement with the EU, Balazs said that such discussions should only start at a stage when a country is well prepared to integrate. "We should not start negotiations until we are at a real point to work towards

BUDAPEST 00000810 002.2 OF 002

integration." That said, the FM highlighted the importance of Serbia, commenting that "we must look for ways to help the current Serbian government to take steps towards integration with western Europe, and with Croatia's EU accession, we need to do something for Serbia, such as visa liberalization."

BRIDGES TO SLOVAKIA

14. (C) FM Balazs also briefed the group on his November 3 meeting with his Slovak counterpart, FM Lajcak. Laying a new foundation stone at the destroyed Ipoly river bridge on the Hungarian/Slovak border, Balazs said this was a visible sign of "an effort to continuing building bridges, politically and physically" between Slovakia and Hungary. Balazs told the Ambassadors that "tensions have eased, and we can work on our problems with higher expectations, but softer implementation" through the 12-point inter-governmental areas of cooperation highlighted during the September 10 meeting of the two Prime Ministers (reftel).

HUNGARY'S "WISEMEN" GROUP

15. (C) Sardonicly mentioning that Hungary was not asked to join the "wisemen" group developing a new NATO strategic concept, Balazs stated "therefore we organized our own Hungarian wisemen group." According to the FM, the group's strategic thinking efforts aim to provide inputs to the NATO agenda on the Organization's main direction, Article 5 issues, and financing.

CLIMATE CHANGE

16. (C) Currently holding the Visegrad Four (V-4) presidency,

Balazs said that Hungary is actively engaged on climate change issues. He has invited interested countries to join together in efforts to forge EU unity, noting recent meetings with Slovenia, Romanian, Bulgarian and Latvian counterparts. The FM said the focus of these meetings is to help develop a common EU energy policy position that would be useful when talking to third parties, such as the United States or China on climate change issues.

DANUBE STRATEGY

17. (C) The FM stated that the EU Council approved the Danube Strategy, patterned after the Baltic Strategy, in June. He also commented as "interesting" that smaller groups within the 27-member EU family are assembling to address such regional issues. Balazs said that Strategy's emphasis is on environmental issues, as well as exploring ways to increase shipping potential for those countries along the river "not blessed" with direct access to sea ports. Rather than looking for more money from the EU, the FM said that the group would look to restructure current available funds, adding that Hungary will harmonize the group's efforts with its 2011 presidency's focus on water issues.

RENEWED ENGAGEMENT WITH TURKEY

18. (C) The FM closed out his briefing by mentioning his recent visit to Turkey, "the first FM to FM contact in a number of years." Balazs said that he expressed support for Turkey-EU rapprochement; welcomed the opening of the border with Armenia; and encouraged a greater Turkish government effort to normalize relations with Cyprus.
LEVINE